

Allison No. 1 Mine and Coke Works, Coke Ovens
W.J. Rainey Coke Company
S of the Mining Complex, East side of Redstone Creek
Allison
Fayette County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-261-A

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
ALLISON NO. 1 MINE AND COKE WORKS, COKE OVENS

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HAER No. PA-261-A

Location: South of the Mining Complex, East side of Redstone Creek, West of the community of Allison No. 1, Redstone Township, Allison, Fayette County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: ca. 1904

Builder: W.J. Rainey Coke Company

Present Owner: unknown

Present Use: abandoned

Significance: At its peak, the Allison No. 1 Mine and Coke Works had approximately 293 coke ovens available, many of which are still extant. Although they vary in condition, the ovens and coke works at Allison No. 1 are one of the best preserved mining sites in the county.

Project Information: In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HAER undertook a comprehensive inventory of Blair, Cambria, Fayette, and Indiana counties as the first step in identifying the region's surviving historic engineering works and industrial resources.

The results of this project have been published in Fayette County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (1990), edited by Sarah H. Heald and produced by HABS/HAER for the National Park Service.

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History:

DESCRIPTION: The abandoned Allison mine and mine buildings are located along Redstone Creek north of the road which leads to the town of Allison No. 1. The headframe that stood above the entrance to the vertical-shaft mine has been demolished and the mine entrance has been sealed off. The headframe and mine were located between Redstone Creek and the company store, a two-and-one-half-story brick building that still stands. At least four other brick buildings stand to the east of the company store. One of them, a small one-story building, served as an office. The others housed a stable, a machine shop, a car shop, and a blacksmith shop.

The former company store, now used as a wood-working shop, is a large two-and-one-half-story building with common-bond red brick walls. It measures about 40' x 30' and retains a number of its original one-over-one-light windows at the second-story level. Stone lintels span the window openings. The gable roof is probably supported by riveted steel roof trusses. The original storefront has been removed and two of the three doorways have been infilled with brick and stone. The building rests on a stone foundation.

The former office building is a small one-story structure, measuring about 10' x 15'. It contains common-bond red brick walls, a gable roof, and rests on a stone foundation. A brick chimney extends through the gable ridge and the building retains its large, narrow one-over-one-light windows.

The three other brick buildings, standing east of the office, are long, narrow structures that housed the stable and shops. All three are similarly constructed with common-bond red brick walls, and steel columns (encased in brick) supporting riveted-steel Fink roof trusses. Decorative brick-work at the gable ends features corbelled brick and pediments. One of the buildings has been partially destroyed, exposing the steel roof truss. This structure contains a large steel tank. Another section of one of the buildings is missing its roof. The buildings vary in size, the largest measuring about 60' x 25'. All of the buildings rest on stone foundations.

About 500' to the south of the former mining complex, on the east side of Redstone Creek, stand the coke ovens. Known as the Allison coke ovens, these rectangular ovens extend about 1,000' along the creek. Many of the ovens are still extant. They vary in condition; many are moderately deteriorated, others are severely deteriorated. Nonetheless, this coke works and the one at Shoaf are the best preserved in the county. The Allison No. 2 works, also known as the Luzerne works, probably had one battery of beehive coke ovens. When in full production the Luzerne works contained about 200 operating ovens. These coke ovens have been obliterated by a scrap-metal operation.

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HISTORY: The Allison No. 1 coal and coke works were built by the W. J. Rainey Coke Company and placed in operation around 1905. At its peak, the plant had approximately 293 coke ovens available. In 1912, the Allison No. 1 plant had 125 employees, thirteen of whom were engaged in coke production. The coke plant had 167 ovens available and produced 48,616 tons of coke in that year. This plant was adjacent to and east of the Allison No. 2 works. The Allison No. 2 coal and coke works were also built about 1905 by the W. J. Rainey Coke Company. At its peak, the entire Allison mining complex had approximately 500 coke ovens available.

Sources:

Map of Connellsville Coke Region and Adjacent Territory, Western Pennsylvania. n.p., ca. 1905 - 1913.
Map of the Connellsville Coke Region and Adjacent Fields. Uniontown: South Penn Engineering Company, 1913.
Map of the Connellsville Coke Region and Adjacent Fields. Uniontown: South Penn Engineering Company, 1921.
Report of the Department of Mines of Pennsylvania: Bituminous Region, 1912. Harrisburg: William Stanley Ray, State Printer 1913.